

In conclusion, God bless our troops, and we will never forget September the 11th in the global war on terrorism.

HEALTH CARE IN PUERTO RICO: HISTORIC PROGRESS AND CONTINUING CHALLENGES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Puerto Rico (Mr. PIERLUISI) for 5 minutes.

Mr. PIERLUISI. Madam Speaker, I rise this morning to discuss the issue of Federal support for health care in Puerto Rico and the other U.S. territories. This is a story of unprecedented progress, but it is also a chronicle of continuing challenges.

While the treatment of the territories under Federal health care programs has substantially improved in recent years, serious disparities still remain. The consequence of these inequalities is not difficult to discern.

Last month, a study found that patients at hospitals in the territories fared significantly worse than patients at hospitals in the States. The study cited funding disparities under Medicaid and Medicare along with the territories' lack of voting representation in the Federal Government as likely causes for these discrepancies. The study concluded that "eliminating the substantial quality gap in the U.S. territories should be a national priority."

Consider Medicaid, which helps our most vulnerable citizens. Medicaid has always operated differently in the territories. The Federal Government pays at least 50 percent of the program's cost in the wealthiest States and upwards of 80 percent in the poorest States. By contrast, Federal law imposes an annual cap on funding in the territories. Historically, Puerto Rico's cut was so low that the Federal Government paid less than 20 percent of Medicaid costs on the island in any given year. Inadequate Federal funding has made it difficult for Puerto Rico to provide quality health care to its low-income population.

If the purpose of this policy was to save the Federal Government money, it was shortsighted. Between 2005 and 2009, over 300,000 Puerto Rican residents moved to the States. Many were men and women of limited means who, upon migrating, immediately became eligible for full benefits under Medicaid and other Federal programs.

Last Congress, my fellow Delegates and I fought hard to ensure that our constituents were treated in an equitable manner in the Affordable Health Care Act. Under the law, funding for Puerto Rico's Medicaid program will triple over the next decade. Though it is far less than Puerto Rico would receive if treated like a State, this increased funding does represent a significant step towards parity.

But the Affordable Care Act did not eliminate serious disparities facing my constituents. For example, Puerto Rico is still subject to unequal treatment

under Medicare. Although island residents pay the same payroll taxes as their fellow citizens in the States, ill-conceived Federal formulas provide lower Medicaid reimbursements to Puerto Rico hospitals.

Despite the pressing need to correct all these disparities, I know that to legislate effectively you must choose your battles wisely, especially in a fiscal climate as challenging as the one our country faces today. Therefore, I have introduced three health bills that would correct unprincipled inequalities and do so in a fiscally responsible way.

The first bill amends the HITECH Act, which provides payments to doctors and hospitals that become users of electronic health records. The act inadvertently excluded Puerto Rico hospitals from the Medicare payments, and my budget-neutral bill would include them. My second bill, which has bipartisan support, would modify a unique Federal law that makes it more difficult for Puerto Rico seniors to enroll in Medicare part B and would reduce the penalties for late enrollment. And my third bill would make it possible for territory Medicaid programs to cover breast and cervical cancer treatments by placing Federal contributions for those services outside the annual cap.

So I have filed these three cost-conscious bills to address some of these disparities we are facing, and I hope to have the support of my colleagues when the time comes to consider them.

Now a word about the current state of affairs in Puerto Rico; after all, I represent Puerto Rico in this Congress. And if we're going to be talking about a crisis in Puerto Rico, I'll tell you about a crisis in Puerto Rico. It is the high incidence of violent crime that is tied to the drug trafficking that is happening in the Caribbean. And I, for one, am doing something productive. I am seeking additional resources because it is in the interest of both the United States as a country, as a whole, and Puerto Rico to increase the presence of Federal law enforcement officers in Puerto Rico.

While I want civil rights to be protected all over America, what I am doing is supporting the ongoing investigation of the Department of Justice. But I am not denigrating the integrity of those who put their lives at risk to defend the safety of our citizenry.

□ 1030

MOURNING THE LOSS OF STAFF SERGEANT MICHAEL GARCIA AND SERGEANT CHRISTOPHER SODERLUND

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Louisiana (Mr. FLEMING) for 5 minutes.

Mr. FLEMING. Madam Speaker, I rise today to mourn the loss of two Louisiana soldiers from Fort Polk who recently died in Logar province, Afghanistan, during Operation Enduring

Freedom. Staff Sergeant Michael Garcia of Bossier City and Sergeant Christopher Soderlund of Pineville, Louisiana, made the ultimate sacrifice by giving their lives in service to this Nation.

It is at this point that important decisions involving the defense of our Nation become most personal. Instead of thinking in abstract terms like casualties, weapons, equipment, we are confronted with the reality that these are not just soldiers; they are in fact our friends, our neighbors, our sons, fathers, brothers.

Staff Sergeant Garcia and Sergeant Soderlund represented the very best America has to offer. Their contribution serves as an enduring reminder to all Americans that the freedoms and liberties we hold so dear are afforded to us only by those who wear the uniform and the loved ones who support them.

Let us pause today to remember the sacrifice these brave soldiers made on behalf of this great Nation.

BULB ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. CONNOLLY) for 5 minutes.

Mr. CONNOLLY of Virginia. Madam Speaker, we are 2 short weeks away from defaulting on American debt, which would devastate our economy and plunge this country, if not the global economy, into a steep recession. We are engaged in three overseas wars as part of the broader struggle to defeat terrorism. Century-old autocracies are crumbling in the Middle East. Extreme drought is destroying farmers' livelihoods across the Southeast, Texas, and Oklahoma, while floods of biblical proportions inundate the upper Midwest. Unprecedented tornadoes have killed hundreds of people in Missouri, Alabama, and Virginia, while the melting of glaciers and polar ice continues to accelerate. Meanwhile, our economy stagnates for lack of any new congressional action to expedite growth.

In response to these existential threats at home and once-in-a-lifetime opportunities for democracy abroad, the Republican leadership has brought to the floor a bill to repeal a non-existent ban on incandescent light bulbs passed by a Republican Congress and signed by a Republican President, President Bush. That's right, light bulbs. Connoisseurs of Internet hearsay are aware that Tea Party conspiracy theorists think President Obama is trying to outlaw the incandescent light bulb even though President Bush signed that law into enactment. Cooler heads, such as representatives of every major light bulb manufacturer in America, from Philips to Johnson Controls, actually support the light bulb efficiency standards because they provide a competitive advantage for American manufacturers relative to their Chinese competitors, who produce shoddy, light-inefficient bulbs. Who

knew that the Tea Party contained so many Manchurian sympathizers who have hidden their proto-internationalist agenda beneath the folds of the Don't Tread on Me flag?

As we have heard, those who would repeal the light bulb efficiency standards believe we are "taxed enough already." Apparently the lowest Federal tax burden in 60 years has left these zealots with extra disposable income, and they want to spend it on inefficient light bulbs. In fact, repeal of the light bulb standards would give Americans the liberty to spend \$85 extra per year on light bulbs to produce no additional light. It's hard to understand how ideologues in this House can suggest imposing \$85 per year on their constituents in order to buy light bulbs which consume more electricity than necessary.

Those who are baffled by Republican support for this anachronistic incandescent bulb tax may want to refer to the legislative record of the House over the last 7 months. The Republican Party has deviated so far from its historic support for conservation that it now supports legislation that would allow air and water pollution with impunity. The new Republican Caucus supports legislation like the BULB Act, which we dealt with last night, and retrogresses to the time of Thomas Edison and the invention of the light bulb. These Republicans sound like flat earthers, and they must really mean it when they call themselves originalists.

This entire situation would be humorous but for the gravity of the threat our Nation faces, from climate change to the debt puzzle, or the opportunities that we will forgo in the Middle East because this House is distracted by a paranoid attack on light bulbs.

STOP SUBSIDIZING ETHANOL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. DUNCAN) for 5 minutes.

Mr. DUNCAN of Tennessee. Madam Speaker, there is much discussion these days about ethanol, and for far too long the Federal Government has been subsidizing ethanol production in a very big way. Three years ago, *Time Magazine* called ethanol and other energy biofuels the clean energy scam. Yet 3 years later, we are dumping more money than ever into the program. It is time to admit that the ethanol program has been a failure.

A study mentioned in a recent column in the *Washington Times* said that our ethanol policies, if not changed, will cost American consumers more than \$500 billion in the 10 years from 2008 to 2017. According to *Time magazine*, the biofuel boom is doing the exact opposite of what it was intended to do. The article calls corn ethanol environmentally disastrous.

We went heavily into ethanol because it was supposed to be good for the environment. The very powerful environ-

mental lobby pushed hard on this. Now we have found that it has done more harm than good, even to the environment. This just goes to show that when someone says something is good for the environment, it is usually because they are going to make money off of it or are going to increase contributions to their organization.

I have an even greater concern that hits home with every American. The ethanol program is an economic disaster. We were promised that using ethanol to fuel cars would reduce gas prices. We were told it would reduce our dependence on foreign oil. If you look at the situation today, gas prices are close to \$4 a gallon, or even higher some places, and we are still at the mercy of foreign producers to supply most of our oil. The only thing the ethanol program has done is raised the price of groceries.

Hardworking Americans are paying more for milk, meats, and everyday items they need from the grocery store. This is because the price of corn has doubled in less than 2 years. In 2009, corn cost \$3.30 a bushel. Today it costs roughly \$7 a bushel. When the price of corn increases, it causes a chain reaction. Corn is used to feed livestock, which increases the price of beef and dairy products. Corn syrup is found in everything, from cereal to salad dressing. Nearly everything at the grocery store costs more today than it did just 1 year ago.

To turn corn into ethanol, it takes diesel fuel to run the machines, fertilizer, and months of hard work from farmers. A study by Cornell University estimates that it costs \$4.50 to produce 1 gallon of ethanol. A gallon of pure ethanol has only about two-thirds the energy of a gallon of gasoline. Yet like a lot of things we tend to do here in Washington, the cost is too high and average Americans are the ones paying for it. In 2010, the Federal Government spent nearly \$8 billion to subsidize the ethanol program. That number is probably closer to \$12 billion when you count money from State and local governments.

The bottom line is that corn should be used to fuel our bodies, not our cars.

I would like to take a moment to tell you about a friend of mine, Harry Wampler. Harry Wampler is the owner of Wampler's Farm Sausage Company in Lenoir City, Tennessee.

The Wampler family started this company in 1937, one of the great small business success stories in my district. However, in 2010, Wampler's Sausage lost money for the first time. They are now losing money every month.

They are not losing money because all of a sudden they are no longer a great company. They are losing money because the cost of raw materials is far too high. Instead of paying 35 cents a pound for hogs like they did in 2009, they pay more than 50 cents a pound, a more than 40 percent increase in just 2 years—40 percent increase in 2 years. To keep up, meat producers like Wam-

pler's are forced to raise prices in the grocery store.

The reason this is happening is simple. It takes a heck of a lot of corn to produce ethanol. The study I mentioned earlier by Cornell estimated that in 2009, one-third of U.S. corn was used to make ethanol.

□ 1040

That is a lot of corn, but it only reduced America's oil consumption by 1.4 percent. In fact, if we were to take all of the corn produced on American farms and convert it to ethanol, it would replace a mere 4 percent of U.S. oil production—a lot of corn with very little result.

Environmentalists shouldn't be happy with the ethanol program either. In this country and around the world, we are destroying forest wetlands and grasslands to make room to plant more corn. The program doesn't make sense for the economy or the environment, even though it was forced on us primarily by environmentalists.

A lot of politicians are afraid to admit the ethanol program was a mistake because they are afraid to offend the farm lobby, and anyone considering running for President may be afraid to offend corn farmers in Iowa. But, Madam Speaker, we can no longer afford to waste money on this program that does not work.

The Ethanol Program does not solve our energy crisis or eliminate our dependence on foreign oil. The only thing it does is drive up grocery prices for everyone in the country.

DON'T TREAD ON D.C.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from the District of Columbia (Ms. NORTON) for 5 minutes.

Ms. NORTON. Madam Speaker, I come to the floor to alert Members who interfere with the local funds of a local jurisdiction, not your own, in this case the District of Columbia, that this year, it will be highlighted in your own district.

The debt limit discussions spotlight our differences, but one idea always has enjoyed the broadest support in this country and in this House. The Federal Government does not interfere with local matters, especially local funds not raised by the Federal Government.

The Framers formed a federal government only after trying a confederation, but it became clear that there were some matters of overarching concern that could be arbitrated only by a true national government. But, they were at great pains to reserve maximum freedom at the local level where people live.

Nothing is more local than the local funds a jurisdiction raises on its own from its own local taxpayers. You raise the funds, you get to say how they will be spent.

The principle applies to all. No second class citizens on local matters, especially local funds, and that includes